

Bill Roy

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Kansas	
COUNTY: Atchison	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

5-6260-002

079/00

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON:
Price Villa (preferred name)

AND/OR HISTORIC:
St. Cecilia's Hall, Mount Saint Scholastica

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
801 South Eighth

CITY OR TOWN:
Atchison

STATE Kansas 66002	CODE 20	COUNTY: Atchison	CODE 005
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict

STREET AND NUMBER:
Mount Saint Scholastica Convent
801 South Eighth

CITY OR TOWN:
Atchison

STATE: Kansas	CODE 20
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STATE: Kansas
COUNTY: Atchison
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:
Atchison County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:
Atchison

STATE: Kansas 66002	CODE 20
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
NONE

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:	CODE:
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FOR NPS USE ONLY

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1872-1874

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Price Villa was built for John M. Price in the southwest part of Atchison in 1872. It was described, while in the process of construction, in the September 24, 1872, edition of the Atchison Daily Champion as "the finest residence in the State." The architect was Thomas Wise and F. W. McLaughlin had the contract for the brickwork. In September, 1872, the Daily Champion reported the estimated cost as \$40,000; in January, 1873, the figure given was \$60,000. Dollar values placed on the property in the mid-1870's ranged from \$75,000 to \$100,000. Some accounts indicate that the building was completed in 1872; others report that the interior was not totally finished until 1874.

John M. Price was a prominent Atchison lawyer, political figure, and promoter. The Price family did not reside in the house for a lengthy period, but while they did, their dinners and entertainments were the talk of the town.

Price's financial position was badly shaken by the Panic of 1873. In an apparent attempt to recoup their fortunes, he and other prominent Atchison businessmen formulated a grand lottery scheme known as the Kansas Land and Immigrant Association. Some of its stated purposes were to promote immigration to Kansas and to benefit the town of Atchison. Two hundred thousand shares were to be sold at \$5.00 apiece, and each shareholder would be entitled to one chance in a drawing for 2,664 pieces of valuable property ostensibly owned by the Association. The top prize would be Price Villa, valued at \$75,000. An extensive advertising campaign was waged throughout the United States through direct mail circulars and newspapers. The Kansas constitution had an anti-lottery provision, but no apparent effort was made to enforce it. In fact, Governor Osborn and other state officials endorsed the scheme.

The five men running the Association--George W. Glick, president (later the first Democrat elected governor of Kansas); Luther C. Challis, vice president; Samuel L. Strickler, secretary; George Storch, treasurer; and John M. Price, general manager--were indicted in federal court in Topeka on April 10, 1876, for using the mails to distribute illegal lottery material and for falsely claiming Association ownership of the properties to be awarded as prizes. Federal court records indicate that the case was continued to the next term but do not show its disposition. Later, in October, 1876, Challis and Strickler were indicted again. They pled guilty in April, 1877, and were fined \$100 each and costs.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Price Villa is a large, impressive three-story red brick building of Renaissance influence situated on a hillside in the southern part of Atchison. Now flanked on three sides by larger buildings of Mount Saint Scholastica, it once stood in stately isolation overlooking the city.

Cut stone quoining at the corners enhances the building's attractiveness. A simple cornice separates the brick wall at the second floor from the mansard roof enclosing the third floor. Window openings on the first and second floors have arched heads. The third floor dormer windows were originally arched to match the other windows. There are first floor bay windows on both the north and south sides of the building.

A square four-story tower topped by a cross is built over the front entrance. The hip-roofed tower originally had terminated with an ornate railing and had circular dormer windows on each side of the hip roof. A flat-roofed porch runs the width of the front facade.

There is a side entrance on the south just west of the bay window. A corresponding entrance on the north side has been removed.

When it was completed as a residence in 1874, reportedly at a cost of \$60,000, Price Villa had five porches and verandas, 38 rooms, 15 halls, 10 stairways, hot and cold water, gas pipes, two bathrooms and all the conveniences of the day. The interior woodwork made extensive use of mahogany, walnut, and rosewood. The house and its outbuildings, which included a large brick barn, a smokehouse, and a poultry house, and the surrounding acreage of lawns, pasture, and orchards constituted one of the most elegant 19th century estates in Kansas.

After the Benedictine Sisters acquired the property in 1877, they had the Villa remodeled and altered as their funds permitted to adapt it to their religious and educational purposes. Some of the interior changes were: six of the large fireplaces have been bricked shut; some of the original parquetry floors have been replaced; all but one of the ceilings with ornamental plaster work have been changed; the floor plan of the structure has been somewhat modified. At the present time Price Villa is used by the music department of Mount Saint Scholastica College. The former outbuildings have long since disappeared and their sites occupied by other educational structures. Even though changes have been made to the building, the exterior of Price Villa still reflects the elegance of its original appearance.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Kansas	
COUNTY	
Atchison	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. The drawing had been postponed a number of times but was finally held on August 25, 1876. Atchison newspapers described the proceedings and listed the numbers of the winners. Price Villa was won by No. 190,736. A list of the names of all the winners was promised, but it never appeared and there is no subsequent mention of the lottery in the Atchison newspapers. There is no known evidence that any of the prizes were awarded or that anyone but the promoters benefited from the lottery.

John Price lost Price Villa through a sheriff's sale on November 1, 1876. In June, James N. Burnes had won a judgment against him for \$13,572.95. Price was given until September by the court to pay or have his property sold by the sheriff. On November 1, Burnes bought the house and grounds for \$17,000.00, apparently to protect himself.

In June, 1877, the Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict, who operated a convent and school in Atchison under the leadership of Rev. Mother Evangelista Kremeter, became interested in acquiring Price Villa. The purchase was made on July 16 for \$20,000 (which was paid over a period of years), and by July 25 the Sisters had moved into Price Villa, which was later renamed St. Cecilia's Hall. Until 1884 it was the only building for the convent and the school; now it is used as a music hall and is surrounded by larger educational buildings of Mount Saint Scholastica.

Price Villa is one of the best examples of residential Renaissance architecture in Kansas. It also has historical significance because of its connection with the widely heralded real estate distribution of the Kansas Land and Immigrant Association in 1875-1876.

9. "Improvements," Atchison Daily Champion, September 24, 1872.
The Laws of the State of Kansas (Topeka, State Printer, 1874), pp. 138, 139.
Leavenworth Daily Times, November 28, 1875, March 30, 1876, June 9, 1876, August 27, 1876.
"Progress of Building," Atchison Daily Champion, July 3, 1872.
Schuster, Sister Mary Faith, O. S. B., The Meaning of the Mountain (Baltimore, Helicon Press, 1963), pp. 60-64.
Topeka Blade, April 4, 20, 28, May 10, June 12, 1876.
Topeka Commonwealth, October 6, 1875, April 29, 1876.
U. S. vs. Luther C. Challis, et. al., U. S. District Court, Topeka.
U. S. vs. Luther C. Challis and Samuel M. Strickler, U. S. District Court, Topeka.
The Weekly Kansas Chief, Troy, December 2, 1875, February 24, 1876, July 27, 1876.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Atchison Daily Champion, January 1, 1873, January 8, 1876, April 30, 1876, August 25, 26, 27, 1876.
 Atchison Daily Globe, July 16, 1894.
 "Atchison Schools," Atchison Champion, February 20, 1879.
 Connelley, William E., A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, v. 2 (Chicago, Lewis Publishing Co., 1918).
 Fay, Agnes E., "Memories of Life in Another Era Cling to a Mansion at Atchison," Kansas City Times, March 19, 1956.
 "Grand Real Estate Distribution" (Atchison, n.d.), two page broadside.
 History of the State of Kansas (Chicago, A. T. Andreas, 1883), p. 378.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		°	'	"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		39	33	14
SE	° ' "	° ' "		95	07	27
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: One acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Charles Hall, Architectural Consultant
Richard Pankratz, Planner

ORGANIZATION: Kansas State Historical Society DATE: May 20, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West Tenth Street

CITY OR TOWN: Topeka STATE: Kansas 66612 CODE: 20

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Nyle H. Miller
Nyle H. Miller

Title Executive Secretary, Kansas State Historical Society

Date Nov. 20, 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS